



## AMERICAN HORNBEAM

*Carpinus caroliniana* Walt.



*Close-grained, strong, tough and durable, American hornbeam wood is used for levers, handles and wedges.*

American hornbeam, blue-beech or musclewood occurs west of the Penobscot River in the southern third of the state. The American hornbeam is most commonly found inhabiting wet woods and the borders of swamps and streams. It is a small, slow-growing tree 10–25 feet tall and 4–10 inches in diameter. The branches are crooked. The trunk is characteristically ridged, or fluted longitudinally.

The **bark** is smooth and grayish-blue. The leaves are alternate, egg-shaped or oval, 2–3 inches long, sharply toothed, smooth above and hairy below. They turn a brilliant scarlet in autumn.





*American hornbeam bark has a sinewed appearance that gives it its alternate name, "musclewood."*

The **flowers** are produced in catkins that open in spring before the leaves.

The **fruit** is a ribbed nutlet, which is attached to the base of a three-lobed bract, and is borne in open clusters.

The **twigs** are reddish-brown, slender and tough. Buds are also reddish-brown and slender, and sharp-pointed.

The **wood** is close-grained, compact, strong, tough and durable. It is used for levers, handles, and wedges.

